

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-11, 13 and 16-29 are pending herein. Claims 21-27 have been allowed. Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to include the subject matter recited in claims 3 and 12, respectively. Claims 2, 4-7, 10-11, 13, 16, 21, 23-27 and 29 have been amended to either depend from independent claims 1 and 9, or have been amended to correct matters of form. Claims 3, 8, 12, 14 and 15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Certain paragraphs in the specification, Tables 2 and 3, and the Abstract have been amended to correct matters of form only. No new matter has been added.

Applicants appreciate the PTO's indication that claims 21-27 have been allowed and that claims 3-5, 12 and 13 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. Although Applicants do not acquiesce to the art-based rejections discussed below, pending independent claims 1 and 9 have been amended to include the subject matter recited in claims 3 and 12, respectively.

1. The rejection of claims 8 and 15 under §112, second paragraph is noted, but deemed moot in view of the cancellation of claims 8 and 15.

2. Claims 1, 2, 6, 9-14, 16-20, 28 and 29 were rejected under §103(a) over either Suzuki or Teramoto in view of Brennan, Coibion, Fairweather, Kelemen or Sato. This rejection is moot in view of the above-discussed amendments to pending claims 1 and 9.

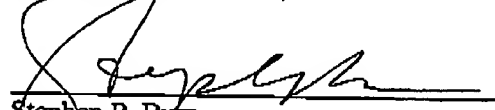
3. Claim 7 was rejected under §103(a) over Suzuki or Teramoto in view of Brennan, Coibion, Fairweather, Kelemen or Sato and further in view of Kita. For the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that pending independent claim 1 is now in condition for allowance. Since claim 7 depends directly from claim 1, that claim is also allowable over the applied prior art of record.

4. Claims 8 and 15 were rejected under §102(b) over Teramoto. This rejection is moot in view of the cancellation of claims 8 and 15.

If the Examiner believes that contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, the Examiner is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the phone number noted below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1446.

Respectfully submitted,


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August 20, 2004
Date

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